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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet presents a position statement by the National Council of Teachers of English on reading, suggesting that reading is a complex act of constructing meaning from print. It argues that during interactions with other readers, people learn to read critically, to question what they read, and to respond in a certain way. To make sure that all individuals have access to the personal pleasures and intellectual benefits of full literacy, the pamphlet argues that society and schools must provide students with (1) access to a wide range of texts; (2) ample time to read a wide range of materials; (3) teachers who help them develop an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies; (4) opportunities to learn how reading, writing, speaking, and listening support each other; and (5) access to the literacy skills needed in a technologically advanced society. It also suggests that all teachers need an extensive knowledge of language development; all administrators need to secure funds and provide opportunities for professional development; and all educational stakeholders need to understand that they can best support beginning and advanced readers by participating actively in public conversation about the goals of literacy learning. (RS)

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# Position Statement on Reading

Furthermore,  
NCTE  
believes  
that...

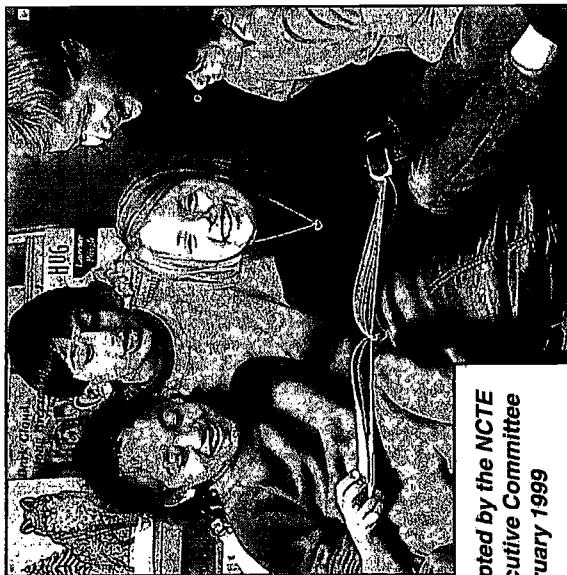
- all teachers need to develop an extensive knowledge of language development, a thorough knowledge of all the language arts—including reading and a repertoire of teaching strategies deep and broad enough to meet the needs of every student;
- all administrators need to secure funds and provide opportunities for professional development; and
- all educational stakeholders—educators, policy makers, and the general public—need to understand that they can best support beginning and advanced readers by participating actively in public conversation about the broad goals of literacy learning while acknowledging teachers as curricula decision makers.

*Adopted by the NCTE  
Executive Committee  
February 1999*

Executive Committee  
at the time of adoption:  
Joan Steinert, Jerome Harsie,  
Anne Ruggles Gere, Sheridan Blau,  
Kathryn Egawa, Richard Luckert,  
Gwendolyn Henry, Yvonne Siu-Runyan,  
Charleen Silva Delfino, Elizabeth Close,  
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Executive Director

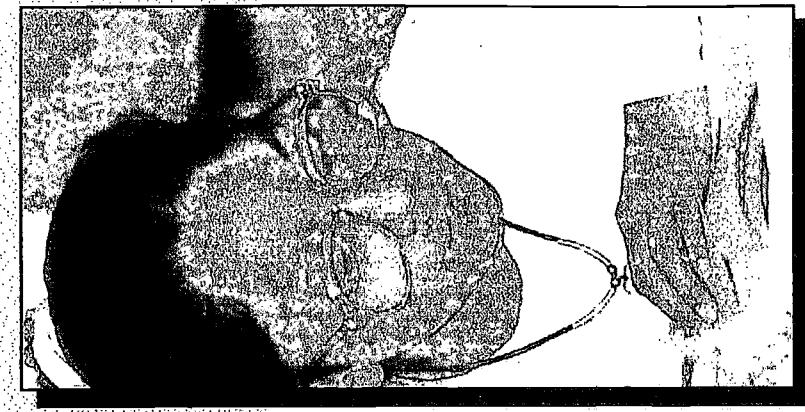
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National Council  
of Teachers  
of English

## Position Statement on Reading



**NCTE**

National Council of Teachers of English  
1111 W. Kenyon Road  
Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096

# NCTE

## Position Statement

### On Reading

**R**eading is the complex act of reconstructing meaning from print. We read in order to better understand ourselves, others, and the world around us; we use the knowledge we gain from reading to change the world in which we live.

Becoming a reader is a gradual process that begins with our first interactions with print. As children, there is no fixed point at which we suddenly become readers. Instead, all of us bring our understanding of spoken language, our knowledge of the world, and our experiences in it to make sense of what we read. We grow in our ability to comprehend and interpret a wide range of reading materials by making appropriate choices from among the extensive repertoire of skills and strategies that develop over time. These strategies include predicting, comprehension monitoring, phonemic awareness, critical thinking, decoding, using context, and making connections to what we already know.

**A**s readers, we talk to others about what we are reading. These interactions expand and strengthen our comprehension and interpretation. In these interactions, we learn to read critically, to question what we read, and to respond in a certain way.

#### We learn to ask:

- *What is this text trying to do for me?*
- *Who benefits from this point of view?*

**I**n order to make sure that all individuals have access to the personal pleasures and intellectual benefits of full literacy, NCTE believes that our society and our schools must provide students with:

- access to a wide range of texts that mirror the range of students' abilities and interests;
- ample time to read a wide range of materials, from the very simple to the very challenging;
- teachers who help them develop an extensive repertoire of skills and strategies;
- opportunities to learn how reading, writing, speaking, and listening support each other; and
- access to the literacy skills needed in a technologically advanced society.



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**National Council  
of Teachers  
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- *What is this text trying to do for me?*
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These questions help us uncover underlying assumptions and motives that otherwise operate invisibly.